R5300-2.2-F

Hispanic Policy Development Project

Volume II

Moving Up to Better Education and Better Jobs

How officials view the obstacles facing Hispanics, their opportunities, and the outlook for the 1980s

The Hispanic Policy Development Project is a non-profit organization—a 501(C)(3)—which encourages the analysis of public policies and policy proposals affecting Hispanics in the United States.

HPDP directs its efforts in particular to the problems of Hispanic youth: secondary education, employment, and access to social services. Compared to other segments of the U.S. population, the Hispanic segment is young. This youthful population is often inadequately served by schools and social service agencies, and many Hispanic young people are insufficiently trained to compete effectively in the job market. To attack these problems, HPDP supports high-level public policy commissions composed of prestigious Hispanics and non-Hispanics; conferences, seminars, and debates around central education and employment issues; both lay and professional analysis and evaluation of specific policy options; and policy analysis competitions open to Hispanic and non-Hispanic scholars as well as Hispanic organizations. HPDP places major emphasis on supporting the work of Hispanic organizations and increasing their access to policy-making networks.

The communication of policy data, recommendations, and proposals is a major part of HPDP's program. Using extensive contacts among representatives of the business and corporate world and among policy makers on both state and national levels, as well as frequent briefing sessions, conferences, and seminars, HPDP seeks to bring its findings to the attention of key groups and leaders throughout the United States. The production of publications is part of that effort.

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How Officials View the Obstacles Facing Hispanics, Their Opportunities, and the Outlook for the 1980s

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Volume II

MOVING UP TO BETTER EDUCATION AND BETTER JOBS

A National Survey of Elected and Appointed Hispanic Officials

conducted by

The Public Agenda Foundation

for

The Hispanic Policy Development Project

Project Director: **Keith Melville**
Survey Research: **Harvey Lauer**

February 1984

Introduction

THE 1980s have been called "The Decade of Hispanics," and certainly the size of the Hispanic population will increase significantly. What is not so certain is whether there will be a corresponding increase in the influence of Hispanics, and real progress toward solution of the pressing problems that face Hispanics. If that is to happen, the problems must be more sharply defined, proposals to alleviate those problems must be formulated, and realistic solutions must be brought to the attention of public and private policy makers. To that end, the Hispanic Policy Development Project is implementing a program—

- To encourage development of practical proposals to deal with problems facing the Hispanic population;
- To encourage active collaboration between Hispanic and non-Hispanic leaders;
- To increase public awareness of Hispanic problems and to mobilize public influence in support of action on the part of both public and private institutions to deal with the most serious Hispanic issues;
- To increase the resources available to Hispanic organizations and individuals for the purpose of undertaking studies of public policy.

The dissemination of research findings and policy analyses is a HPDP priority. Publication of these two reports that have emerged from the 1983 poll conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation is only the beginning of a major effort which, over time, will produce a series of papers on different aspects of the Hispanic reality.

In its brief preface, below, the Public Agenda Foundation points out that its findings reflect only the opinions of a sample group of elected and appointed Hispanic officials. These are influential individuals whose views deserve to be carefully considered by Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike. But it cannot be assumed that their opinions necessarily are shared by other segments of Hispanic leadership. Nor can it be assumed that the views they express are representative of the Hispanic population as a whole. They are largely educated and successful Hispanics, and they may not reflect the attitudes of the entire Hispanic community.

Some of these findings or their interpretation may provoke disagreement and spark debate. But we feel that presenting these data and provoking debate is a healthy way to dispel stereotypes about Hispanics and to focus public attention on the obstacles that Hispanics continue to face in achieving full integration into this society.

The Public Agenda Foundation was responsible for conducting the survey and interpreting its findings, which are presented in these two reports, **Volume I, Moving Into the Political Mainstream,** and **Volume II, Moving Up to Better Education and Better Jobs.** The questionnaire and a tabulation of responses, together with a copy of the letter sent to potential respondents, can be found in the Appendix. Readers interested in looking more closely at the open-ended questions or in examining the computer printout are invited to query HPDP.

There are many other sources of reliable data about Hispanics. Readers looking for additional information are directed to the list of organizations in the Appendix at the end of this report. The list is by no means all-inclusive, and provides only a starting point for people who want to learn more about Hispanics.

For more information about HPDP's activities and publications, send your request, together with your name and address, to—

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We welcome your questions and comments.

Siobhan Oppenheimer-Nicolau
President
Hispanic Policy Development Project

The Public Agenda Foundation

Last year the Hispanic Policy Development Project asked us to carry out a challenging assignment, one that to our knowledge had not been done before. We were asked to conduct a national study of elected and appointed Hispanic officials. In June and July interviews were conducted with 448 Hispanic officials, drawn from all levels of government and from each of the major Hispanic subgroups: Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and "other Hispanics." They were asked about the obstacles facing the Hispanic community, its opportunities, and the outlook for the 1980s.

Despite frequently voiced concern about a lack of common cause among Hispanic groups, we found a surprisingly high level of agreement among respondents about priority concerns for the entire Hispanic community. The first report summarizing the results of this study, Volume I, Moving Into the Political Mainstream, focuses on one of those concerns, the as yet unrealized political potential of Hispanics. The second report, Volume II, Moving Up To Better Education and Better Jobs, focuses on the other priority concern so frequently expressed in these interviews. In the estimation of these officials, unemployment and underemployment are at the top of the list of problems facing Hispanics today. Our interviews shed a good deal of light on what Hispanic officials believe to be contributing factors, the role education plays in perpetuating the problem, and what needs to be done to improve matters.

Many of these officials agreed that the very fact that so little information about Hispanics is available to policy makers is itself a serious problem. Studies such as this can help alleviate that problem. What these officials express is a matter of great concern not only to the more than 15 million mainland Hispanics, but also to that much broader group of citizens who want to know more about the nation's fastest growing minority group. We think that the two reports which summarize the study's results should contribute to a better understanding of this unique and increasingly important segment of the U.S. population.

Daniel Yankelovich
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1.
Study Design and Methodology

Early in 1983, the Hispanic Policy Development Project called on the Public Agenda Foundation—a non-profit, nonpartisan research and education organization—to conduct a national survey of elected and appointed Hispanic officials in the United States. Our goal was to probe the concerns of Hispanic officials at various levels of responsibility and from various regions of the country, and to explore their perceptions of the chief problems facing Hispanics in the 1980s.

The Sample

Our sample of 448 Hispanics—all former or current elected or appointed officials—was drawn from lists compiled by the National Council of La Raza, based on information provided by the National Association of Elected and Appointed Officials, state governments, and state political parties. The sample includes a Member of the U.S. Congress, state legislators, city council members, school board officials, magistrates, and county sheriffs, clerks, treasurers, assessors, and other local office-holders. It was drawn from nine states which together include some 88.7 percent of the nation's Hispanic population as defined by the 1980 Census:

	Total Hispanic Population (000)	Percent of Total Hispanic Population	Percent of Hispanic Leaders in Sample
California	4,066	31	12
Texas	3,531	27	30
New York	1,927	14	7
Florida	1,048	8	3
New Mexico	595	4	24
New Jersey	535	4	1
Arizona	531	4	9
Illinois	671	5	2
Colorado	381	3	12
	13,285	100	100

In addition to the fact that there were far more males in our sample than females (361 males compared to 76 females), our sample differed from the Hispanic population as a whole in another respect. Whereas only about 40 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population was born in this country, fully 92 percent of our sample was born here.

Sample Composition by Ethnic Background

While every effort was made to include in our sample officials from each of the various Hispanic subgroups, because the ranks of elected and appointed officials do not reflect the numerical importance of each of these subgroups, they are not represented proportionately in this study. Here, according to country of descent, is the composition of our sample:

Sample Compositions by Country of Descent

	Number	Percentage
Mexico	231	52
Puerto Rico	35	8
Cuba	18	3
Spain	66	15
Other	98	21
	448	100

Although special efforts were made to locate Hispanic officials from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, two groups are underrepresented. While Puerto Ricans represent 15 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population, Puerto Rican officials comprise only 8 percent of this sample. Similarly, while Cubans

represent some 7 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population, Cubans comprise just 3 percent of our survey respondents.

The disproportionately high number of Mexican Americans in the sample can be attributed in part to their residence in towns and small cities in the Southwest which offer more opportunities for government service than do large cities. On a proportional basis, fewer residents of Los Angeles or New York City hold elective or appointive office compared to those who live in New Mexico, Colorado, or West Texas. That the ratio of Chicano officials to the size of that group is higher than the ratio for Puerto Ricans reflects, in other words, the size of the towns and cities in which these groups live as much as it reflects the effectiveness of their political organizations.

The Questionnaire

An introductory letter was mailed to prospective respondents in April 1983, describing the purpose of the study and the fact that it was being conducted for the Hispanic Policy Development Project.

Telephone interviews, based on a structured questionnaire, were conducted in May, June, and July, 1983. These interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. Most of them took place during business hours.

2.
Hispanics and the Job Ladder

Over the past few years, while the Hispanic unemployment rate has been lower than that for Blacks, it has been substantially higher than the White unemployment rate. In 1981, for example, the unemployment rate for Hispanics was 10.8 percent, higher than the rate of 6.9 percent for Whites, yet lower by a considerable margin than the 15.6 percent rate for Blacks.

The average figure for all Hispanic groups obscures the very different incidence of unemployment for various Hispanic groups. Cubans, for example, have lower unemployment rates and generally are more successfully integrated into the economic mainstream than either Mexicans or Puerto Ricans. This can be attributed in part to the fact that the Cuban labor force is somewhat older than other Hispanic groups. Older workers have more marketable skills, more work experience, and thus somewhat lower jobless rates. There are other reasons too for the relative success of Cubans. A higher level of formal education permits them to enter higher-paying occupations with a more secure future. Today, roughly half the Cuban men are employed in generally well-paid managerial and administrative positions in the professions, or in technical or craft jobs.

If Cubans have a fairly secure foothold on the job ladder, that cannot be said of Puerto Ricans. Whether measured by their unemployment rate (which in 1981 was roughly 14 percent, twice the rate for Whites, and substantially higher than the overall rate of 10.8 percent for Hispanics) or their median family income of $11,400 in 1981 (compared to $21,300 for Cuban families), or the kinds of jobs they hold (only five percent of Puerto Rican workers are professionals, compared to 15 percent of Cubans), Puerto Ricans continue to be the most disadvantaged of Hispanic groups, while Chicanos are intermediate between Puerto Ricans, on the one hand, and Cubans and "other Hispanics."

As serious as the unemployment problem is, especially for Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, there is an even more troubling problem for Hispanics. Whether Hispanics can make real progress in the job market depends less on finding employment for those currently out of work than it does on their ability to move up the job ladder to higher status jobs and better pay.

While there are many successful Hispanic business people, bureaucrats, academicians, professionals, and white-collar workers, the fact is that a large group of Hispanics is trapped in the lower occupational tiers of the American economy. Several years ago, when economist Barry Chiswick did a comparative analysis of the economic progress of various immigrant groups, he found that—unlike others—Mexican-Americans of the second and third generations have not significantly improved their economic status. The same generalization apparently applies to Puerto Ricans. While there has been some slight upgrading in the occupational status of Hispanics over the past decade, those changes reflect what has been happening to the entire labor force. As a consequence, the relative status of Hispanics has not improved.

A great many Hispanics continue to work in low-paid jobs which offer little promise of employment security or career advancement. Disproportionately, Hispanics are clustered in blue-collar jobs far from the growth sectors of the labor force. They work as machine operators or laborers, in service occupations such as fast-food operations, or in dead-end jobs as hospital orderlies or security guards. These are the occupations most prone to slack periods and to part-time or piecework arrangements.

This is what we wanted to discuss with the officials we interviewed—why, in their opinion, have Hispanics had so much trouble climbing the job ladder, what the obstacles are, and what role education plays in keeping Hispanics out of the more promising careers. The answers of the 448 Hispanic officials we interviewed represent their sense of the employment problem for Hispanics, and what they believe can be done about it.

3.
How Serious Is Hispanic Unemployment?

The Employment of Hispanics Is the Number One Concern of Hispanic Officials.

- Asked to rank some 21 problems in their order of importance, officials indicated that Hispanic unemployment is their number one concern. Seventy-three percent of the sample agreed that this is either a "serious" or a "very serious" problem.
- Asked to name "the single most crucial problem facing Hispanics today," the most frequent response was jobs. The words of one man, a Puerto Rican who serves as a public engineer in New York, were typical: "Jobs are the biggest problem—unemployment and underemployment. Many Hispanics are in jobs beneath their capabilities."
- The jobs problem is regarded as particularly serious by Puerto Rican officials. Fully 91 percent of the Puerto Ricans in our sample felt that Hispanic unemployment is a "serious" or "very serious" problem, compared to 73 percent of the Chicanos and 61 percent of the Cubans.

Which Are the Most Serious Problems Facing Hispanics?

(Percentage of Respondents Who Feel That This Is a Serious Problem)

1. Hispanic Unemployment 73%
2. Low Hispanic Voting Rates 68%
3. Undocumented Workers 64%
4. Hispanic Education 62%
5. Lack of Information About Hispanics . . . 61%

- Those who identify themselves as liberals are far more concerned about the Hispanic unemployment problem. Eighty percent of our self-defined liberal respondents expressed serious concern about Hispanic unemployment, compared to 58 percent of the self-defined conservatives.

4.
Moving Up the Job Ladder: What's the Problem?

When we asked respondents why many Hispanics have had trouble moving up the job ladder, we found very **little** support for several factors commonly discussed as obstacles to Hispanic advancement. Fewer than one in five of our respondents, for example, agreed that the feeling among some Hispanics that jobs and U.S. residence are "temporary" is a substantial factor holding them back in the workplace. Fewer than a quarter of our respondents felt that competition with Blacks and other minorities is keeping Hispanics from moving up the job ladder. Only 37 percent of our respondents regard the tendency of many educated Hispanics to enter fields with limited opportunities for advancement as a serious obstacle.

There were, however, four factors that a majority of our respondents considered serious obstacles:

• Lack of Education

By a substantial margin, Hispanic officials feel that lack of education is the main obstacle preventing Hispanics from climbing the job ladder. This concern about education was voiced in several parts of the study; it was, for example, one of the two most common responses when we asked respondents at the beginning of the interview to identify the single most crucial problem. And it was regarded as a serious problem by more than two-thirds of the officials of each Hispanic subgroup. (We examine the education problem and what might be done about it in greater detail in the following pages of this report.)

• Lack of Job Skills

Second only to lack of education was concern about lack of job skills. This is regarded by more than six out of ten officials from each of the Hispanic subgroups as an important obstacle. It is a problem about which many officials commented. "Many Hispanics are simply not skilled for the trades or professions," as one Hispanic-American put it. "What's really needed," said a Puerto Rican who is currently a member of a community school board in New York City, "is to provide opportunities for Hispanics to learn professional and managerial skills."

Four Reasons Why Hispanics Have Had Trouble Climbing the Job Ladder: Percent Who See Each as a Serious Problem

1. Lack of Education 69%
2. Lack of Job Skills 62%
3. Lack of Self-Confidence 57%
4. Discrimination on the Job 52%

• Lack of Self-Confidence

A third factor frequently mentioned was "lack of self-confidence." While Cubans do not regard this as a substantial problem, officials from each of the other Hispanic groups do. Female respondents were particularly inclined to emphasize the importance of self-confidence. One woman, a county clerk in New Mexico, said, "A lot of Hispanics don't have the confidence to express themselves, or to be aggressive when they should be." Another woman, a district court clerk from New Mexico, pointed to the problem of Hispanics who won't take a chance to move up. "I think...once

Hispanics get a job, they want to keep it for security. They won't take a chance of losing the job."

- **Discrimination on the Job**

While it is not regarded by Hispanic officials as one of the greatest obstacles to Hispanic advancement in the workplace, discrimination against Hispanics is still regarded by a majority as a serious problem. It is considered particularly important by Puerto Rican officials, four out of five of whom regard it as a serious problem. One Puerto Rican from Brooklyn described what he regards as a pattern of discriminatory promotion practices. There is typically, as he sees it, a kind of "gentlemen's agreement." "An Anglo and a Hispanic are hired to do the same job. While the Hispanic is kept in the dark by his co-workers, the Anglo is well-advised and well-trained. Then when a promotion is offered, it goes to the Anglo because he seems more on the ball. Many Puerto Ricans tend to accept that. When they're told—subtly or crudely—that they're not wanted further up the job ladder, they don't fight back. We've been taught to believe that it's bad manners to force yourself where you are not wanted." While some comments were made about discriminatory hiring practices, we did not find great dissatisfaction with Affirmative Action programs. A majority of Hispanic officials see Affirmative Action programs as at least somewhat effective.

5.
The Matter of Undocumented Workers

Illegal immigration and undocumented workers have been prominent in the news recently as Congress has tried to address the question of reforming the immigration laws. What finally prompted Congress to delay immigration law reform was the "employer sanctions" proposal—a controversial clause in the Simpson-Mazzoli bill which would make it a crime to hire an immigrant who is here illegally. Much of the debate over that bill's impact centered on the issue of what measures can be taken to control illegal immigration, and which of those measures—such as "employer sanctions"—might have the unintended effect of tempting employers to discriminate against anyone who "looks Hispanic."

So we were interested in probing the sentiments of Hispanic officials on this issue. How concerned are they about the problem of undocumented workers? And what do they think about the problems caused for Hispanics in the labor force by undocumented workers?

• The Problem of Undocumented Workers

This is rated a serious issue by some two-thirds (64 percent) of the entire sample. Not surprisingly, considering its immediate impact on Mexican Americans and on the labor force in those Southwest states where much of the Mexican American population is concentrated, Chicanos are most concerned about it. More than seven out of 10 (71 percent) Mexican American officials consider it to be a serious problem. Among the several Hispanic subgroups, Puerto Ricans are least concerned about it—with 48 percent of them regarding it as a serious problem.

• Should the United States Make It Easier for Undocumented Workers To Work?

Judging by responses to this question, there is no clear sentiment among elected and appointed Hispanic officials about whether amnesty should be granted to undocumented Hispanics living in this country. Among the Puerto Ricans and Cubans we interviewed, a slight majority (55 percent and 54 percent respectively) favored granting amnesty. Among Mexican Americans and Hispanics indicating U.S. descent, a slight majority (56 percent and 55 percent respectively) opposed it. There are greater differences along liberal-conservative lines on this question than there are among the various Hispanic subgroups. Among the self-defined conservatives, 64 percent are opposed to granting amnesty to undocumented workers, while only 25 percent favor it. Liberals, however, favor amnesty by a margin of 55 to 33 percent. It would appear that this is an issue about which many Hispanics are ambivalent. Because there are persuasive arguments for and against granting amnesty to undocumented workers, no clearly formed majority sentiment about what should be done has emerged.

6.
Lack of Education – The Biggest Obstacle of All

• Lack of Education is Regarded as the Chief Obstacle That Keeps Hispanics From Climbing the Job Ladder

It is regarded as a serious problem by a two-thirds majority of the Hispanic officials from each subgroup we interviewed. That fact and the fact that education was frequently mentioned by our respondents at the beginning of the interview, in answer to an open-ended question about the single most crucial problem facing Hispanics today, indicate how prominent an issue education is. "We need to show our youths that education is the **only** way to beat the system," said one woman, the Mexican American mayor of a small town in Texas. "We've got to emphasize, starting at the grade school level, that getting a good education is **very** important."

• A Particularly Pressing Problem

Lack of education is considered a particularly pressing problem by the younger Hispanic leaders we interviewed, by those who are better educated, and by Puerto Rican leaders.

• The Hispanic Stake in the Schools

Because fertility rates of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are much higher than those of the American population as a whole, Hispanics will continue for the foreseeable future to have a special stake in the schools. The schools—which will contain a disproportionate number of Hispanic children—in turn will have to be particularly well attuned to the needs and the progress of Hispanic children. The emphasis that Hispanic officials place on education may be regarded as a reflection of their real concern about how well the schools will serve their community in the years to come.

7.
The High Drop-Out Rate: Diagnosis and Prescription

Failure to complete high school is one of the major obstacles that keeps people from stepping on the first rung of a career ladder leading to well-paid and secure employment. The evidence points quite dramatically to the fact that many Hispanic teenagers don't complete high school—and their failure in this regard keeps them in the lowest paid and least promising parts of the labor force.

While the average educational attainment of Hispanic youth has increased over the past decade, their drop-out rate is still significantly higher than it is for other groups. In 1980, for example, while 71 percent of the Anglo population and 51 percent of the Black population had completed at least four years of high school, only 45 percent of Hispanics had done so. For Puerto Ricans, the rate was even lower—38 percent.

In this respect, as with income and job status, Cubans fare quite well. On average, they are more likely to have completed high school and some college than Anglo youths. But among other Hispanics, the situation is decidedly different. Two out of five Hispanic youths enter adulthood without a high school diploma, and nearly half of all Puerto Rican youth do not complete high school.

Many of the Hispanic officials we interviewed expressed great concern about Hispanic drop-outs. "The lack of a good education will really hold you back," as one woman, a Puerto Rican member of a community school board in New York, put it. "Right now, more of our kids are dropping out than going on to college, and they're paying the price for it."

Many explanations have been offered to explain the high drop-out rate among Hispanics—including language barriers, racial discrimination, pressing economic problems, back-and-forth migration patterns, low educational aspirations, and other factors. We wanted to find out which of these factors are regarded by elected and appointed Hispanic officials as the main factors explaining the high drop-out rate.

We found that several common explanations for that high drop-out rate are not considered by most Hispanic officials to be very convincing:

There Is No Consensus Among Hispanic Officials that Language Barriers Are a Significant Cause of School Drop-Outs. Among the fourteen factors that the Hispanic officials in our sample considered as causes of the high drop-out rate, two relating to language barriers—difficulty with English, and too few bilingual programs—were **not** considered significant by a majority of our sample. Only about a third of the sample ranked "difficulty with English" as an important factor contributing to the drop-out rate. Neither was there any consensus among most Hispanic officials that the absence of bilingual programs in schools contributes significantly to the drop-out rate. Puerto Rican officials were the exception: two-thirds were convinced that this **is** an important factor. (It is worth noting here that 92 percent of our sample was born in the United States, which may account for a tendency to play down language barriers.)

Discrimination in the Schools Is Not Considered a Serious Problem, or One that Contributes Significantly To the Drop-Out Problem. Discrimination is regarded by less than a third of our sample as a serious problem in the schools, or one that contributes significantly to the drop-out problem. Although Cubans and Puerto Ricans are somewhat more concerned about it, less than a third of our total Hispanic sample regard discrimination as an important factor.

A Pattern of Back-and-Forth Migration to the Native Country Is Not Regarded as a Significant Cause of School Drop-Outs. Nationwide, foreign-born Hispanic youths have a higher drop-out rate than do those born in the United States. So it is sometimes assumed that the Hispanic families' pattern of back-and-forth migration may contribute significantly to the drop-out problem. Our sample, however, does not regard this as a significant factor. Fewer than one-third

see it as an important factor in explaining the drop-out rate. While regarded as slightly more of a problem by Puerto Ricans and Cubans than others, only about three out of 10 of those in our sample considered this a significant factor.

Major Reasons For the High Drop-Out Rate

• Hispanic Officials Are Critical of the Schools for Not Providing Special Services for Children with Serious Problems

Among the fourteen factors that we asked Hispanic officials to consider as causes of the high drop-out rate, the second most frequently mentioned was a lack of special services for Hispanic children with special problems—such as pregnant teenagers, youths with drug problems, those with learning disabilities, and those from needy families. There is real concern about the fact that schools are not sufficiently attentive to children with special problems. Some two-thirds of our sample agreed that this is an important cause of the drop-out rate. In their responses to this question, Puerto Ricans were more critical of the schools than other Hispanic leaders.

• Hispanic Officials Consider the Family To Be the Key to Educational Success

Two of the factors most frequently mentioned as causes of the high drop-out rate relate to the educational level and the economic situation of the family. The single most frequently cited factor was parents who are uneducated, mentioned by two-thirds (66 percent) of the sample. The Cuban officials we interviewed did not express much concern about the family's role, but it was considered by Hispanic officials from each of the other ethnic groups as a most significant factor. In their comments, many officials linked the low educational levels of parents to the low educational aspirations and expectations of their children.

• Almost as Frequently Mentioned Was a Lack of Encouragement by Parents

Again, the Cubans were an exception, but the other groups agreed that this is a significant factor in explaining why so many Hispanic youths do not continue in school. "If Hispanic kids are going to stay in school," a Puerto Rican community school board member from New York City said, "their parents are going to have to be more involved in the schools, and more supportive of what their children are doing there."

• A Majority of the Hispanic Officials Consider the Fact that Many Students Have To Work To Help Support Their Families An Important Contributing Factor

Studies have shown that Hispanic high school students more frequently drop out because of family financial difficulties than do students from other backgrounds, and that they are more often employed while in school. It would appear, then, that the necessity of supplementing family income is the reason many Hispanic youths drop out. A Cuban member of the school board in Dade County, Florida, said many Hispanics are caught in a vicious circle: "In the first place,the head of household often doesn't have a very good job, or adequate wages. Because of that, the teen-aged children have to quit school to go to work. And because they never finish the high school diploma, it's harder in turn for them to get a good job and good wages."

8.
The Language Barrier: the Persistent Question of Bilingual Education

Several months ago, when reauthorization hearings began in Congress on the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, this issue once again became a topic of bitter debate. Critics of bilingual instruction repeated what they have said so often in the past, that if we adopt a policy of bilingual instruction, it will lead to a divided, bilingual society. They argue that encouraging those who do not speak English to retain their native language is a disservice to them, and could prove a fatal handicap in a society where well-honed English language skills are increasingly important in the job market.

Sentiments are equally strong on the other side of this argument. The fundamental concern of supporters of bilingual education is that since so many Hispanics come from homes in which English is not the main language, their children are at a disadvantage in classrooms where proficiency in English is taken for granted. They feel that it makes sense to teach students some subjects in a language they understand while they are acquiring a proficiency in English. Many people feel that literacy in both Spanish and English will improve students' job prospects.

We wanted to learn how important Hispanic officials perceive the language barrier to be, both in the classroom and the workplace, and how much emphasis they think should be placed on bilingual education.

Although a majority of respondents did not rank language as an important factor contributing to the drop-out rate, they made frequent references to language when we asked them about the major obstacles facing Hispanics. As one Hispanic official from New York said, "Because of their inability to comprehend and use the English language, many Hispanics simply don't understand what is happening in the schools."

• How Important are Bilingual Programs in the Schools?

Once again, although the lack of language skills or an insufficient number of bilingual programs are **not** considered major reasons for the Hispanic drop-out rate, our respondents displayed strong support for bilingual education. Seventy-one percent of those in our sample **disagree** with the statement "Bilingual programs put Hispanic children at a disadvantage." A 73-percent majority feels that such programs are worth the time and effort they require. Similarly, about three out of four Hispanic officials feel that bilingual literacy makes Hispanics more employable. And there is a strong conviction among Hispanic officials that bilingual programs are an effective way to help Hispanic children do better in school and in the workplace.

• How Much of an Emphasis Should Be Placed on Spanish-Language Instruction?

Some of the officials we interviewed were outspoken critics of bilingual programs: "We shouldn't make any compromises on this question—no bilingual programs," said one man, the director of investigative services in a city in Florida. "Everything should be taught in English." But **the majority of our officials displayed a moderate position on the issue.** Only a tiny fraction (1 percent) prefer the radical option of offering all courses in Spanish. A 75-percent majority favors the teaching of basic subjects in English, with supplementary courses in Spanish.

• Support for a Moderate Bilingual Position

In summary, although very few elected and appointed Hispanic officials see language barriers as among the most important causes of the dropout rate or unemployment, most of them support moderate bilingual instruction as the most effective means of making progress in the schools, and **they also feel that bilingual literacy enhances a student's job opportunities.**

Appendix

A. Composition of the Sample

Age

Under 35	20%
35-49	50%
50-64	27%
Refused	3%

Gender

Male	83%
Female	17%

Education

Graduate Degree or Law Degree	22%
College Graduate	22%
Some College	32%
High School Graduate	20%
Some High School or Less	4%

Political Affiliation

Liberal	28%
Conservative	20%
Middle of the road	48%
Other	2%
Don't know	2%

Country of Birth

U.S.	92%
Outside U.S.	8%

Country of Descent

Mexico	53%
U.S.	18%
Spain	15%
Puerto Rico	8%
Cuba	3%
Other	3%

Religion

Catholic	86%
Protestant	6%
Other	5%
None	2%
Refused	1%

B. Introductory Letter

Hispanic Policy Development Project

April _____, 1983

Your name has been selected from a national list of elected Hispanic officials for possible participation in a study sponsored by the Hispanic Policy Development Project.

The objective of HPDP is to provide policymakers with accurate, unbiased data on the Hispanic population so that policy decisions—crucial to the well-being and future productivity of this growing population—can be made on facts rather than stereotype, ignorance, or indifference.

This is *not* an academic study. With your help, we hope to broaden the knowledge of the non-Hispanic leader-

ship about Hispanic problems and concerns, as well as increase Hispanic participation in the policymaking process.

Within the next several weeks, you may be contacted by telephone for a 20-minute interview which will deal with your attitudes and opinions on the major issues and problems faced by the Hispanic population. The study results will be strictly confidential, and no respondent will be quoted by name in any of the published reports.

The findings of the study will be published as a series of booklets which will be disseminated to policymakers across the country, and all materials will of course be made available to study participants.

In accordance with our survey methodology, we are selecting a random sample of respondents from our leadership list. If you are contacted, we very much appreciate the time from your busy schedule, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Siobhan Oppenheimer-Nicolau
President

C. Survey Results

1. Taking into account all the different groups in the U.S. Hispanic population, how do you feel about the prospects for Hispanics as a whole over the next decade? Do you feel that their prospects are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

   a. Excellent 31%
   b. Good 48%
   c. Fair 18%
   d. Poor 2%
   e. Not sure/Don't know 1%

2. Compared with other minority groups, how would you rate the prospects for Hispanics as a whole—would you say the prospects for Hispanics are better, worse, or about the same?

   a. Better 65%
   b. About the same 30%
   c. Worse 5%
   d. Not sure/Don't know 0%

3. Overall, what would you say is the *single* most crucial problem facing Hispanics today? **(UNAIDED)**

   Education 35%
   Jobs 24%
   Lack of Political Involvement 11%
   Lack of Hispanic Unity 11%
   Racial Discrimination 7%
   Other 12%

4. I'm going to read a list of issues that affect many Hispanics in the U.S. today. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the issue on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" means that you feel this is a very serious problem, and "1" means that you feel that this is not a problem at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Hispanic unemployment rates	73%
b. Issue of Puerto Rican statehood or independence	18%
c. U.S. relations with Cuba	46%
d. Discrimination against Hispanics on the job	56%
e. The amount of education most Hispanics have	62%
f. Family size among Hispanics	32%
g. Loss of Hispanic traditions	41%
h. Problems *of* undocumented workers	64%
i. Problems *caused by* undocumented workers	50%
j. Newspaper, TV coverage, and movies which are unfair to Hispanics	45%
k. Competition with other minorities for social services	32%
l. Hispanics not wanting to adopt American ways and customs	15%
m. Lack of information about Hispanics available to U.S. policymakers	61%
n. Low Hispanic voting rates	68%
o. Problems with the design of affirmative action programs	44%
p. Lack of political cooperation *within* Hispanic groups	56%
q. Lack of political cooperation *among* Hispanic groups	56%
r. Teenage pregnancy among Hispanics	42%
s. Failure of the administration to support affirmative action programs	57%
t. Lack of political cooperation between Hispanics and other minority groups	43%

u. Problems created for Hispanic workers by the large numbers of Anglo women entering the labor force 23%

5. Which Hispanic group do you think enjoys the brightest prospects for the next decade? **(UNAIDED)**

1. Puerto Ricans 7%
2. Chicanos (Mexican Americans) 61%
3. Cubans 10%
4. Other: Specify_____ 5%
5. No particular group 7%
6. Don't know 10%

6. Which group may have the worst prospects? **(UNAIDED)**

1. Puerto Ricans 21%
2. Chicanos (Mexican Americans) 9%
3. Cubans 26%
4. Other: Specify_____ 16%
5. No particular group 8%
6. Don't know 21%

7. Once in the labor force, many Hispanics seem to be unable to climb the job ladder. For example, only about 8% of Hispanic workers hold professional or managerial jobs vs. 15% for the general population. What in your opinion is the *single greatest obstacle* faced by Hispanics who enter the workplace? **(UNAIDED)**

Education 44%
Discrimination 23%
Lack of Confidence, Assertiveness 13%
Language Barriers 3%
Other 17%

8. I'm going to read a list of reasons that some observers say are responsible for the inability of many Hispanics to move up to better jobs. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the reason on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that you feel that this is not a reason at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Discrimination on the job	52%
b. Difficulty with English	42%
c. Ineffective Affirmative Action programs	48%
d. Lack of education	69%
e. Competition with Blacks, Asians, and other minority groups	24%
f. Competition between Hispanics and Anglo women	29%
g. Tendency of many educated Hispanics to enter fields with limited opportunities	37%
h. Lack of job skills	62%
i. Lack of self-confidence	57%
j. Limited expectations and aspirations	47%
k. Not wanting to adopt American ways	16%
l. Slower growth of public employment in areas such as education, hospital service, welfare, and other agencies	33%
m. Feeling that jobs and U.S. residence are "temporary"	18%

9. How effective do you feel Affirmative Action programs have been for lower-income Hispanics? Has Affirmative Action been very effective, somewhat effective, or not very effective at all?

a. Very effective 7%
b. Somewhat effective 56%
c. Not very effective 33%
d. Not sure/Don't know 4%

10. How about for Hispanics at the middle-income level—has Affirmative Action been very effective, somewhat effective, or not effective at all?

a. Very effective 13%
b. Somewhat effective 64%
c. Not effective 19%
d. Not sure/Don't know 4%

11. I'm going to read two statements about the *majority* of undocumented workers. Please indicate which one comes closest to your own view.

a) Undocumented Hispanic workers are filling undesirable jobs that would otherwise remain vacant.

OR

b) Undocumented Hispanic workers are taking jobs away from Americans.

A 66%
B 28%
Not sure/Don't know 5%

12. Nearly two out of five Hispanic youths are entering adulthood without a high school diploma—a dropout rate which exceeds that of Blacks and is more than double that of the Anglo population. In your opinion, what is the *single greatest obstacle* to better education for Hispanics in the U.S. today? **(UNAIDED)**

Lack of parental concern 19%
Financial obstacles 22%
Problems with educational system 21%
Low motivation, confidence 12%

Language barriers 7%
Other 19%

13. I'm going to read a list of reasons given for the high Hispanic dropout rate. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the problem on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that you feel this is not a reason at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Racial discrimination	31%
b. Teenage pregnancy	27%
c. Difficulty with English	35%
d. Too few bilingual programs	41%
e. Too few Hispanic teachers	49%
f. Parents who are uneducated	66%
g. Many students have to work and help support families	50%
h. Lack of special services for children with serious problems	61%
i. Frequent back-and-forth migration to native country	26%
j. Lower expectations and aspirations of Hispanic students	48%
k. Lack of encouragement by parents	61%
l. Too few parochial schools	21%
m. Bad influences of friends and other youths	53%
n. Poor grades of Hispanic students	46%

14. Many different views of bilingual education programs have been expressed by Hispanic educators. I'm going to read a list of statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if you agree, or disagree. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. Bilingual programs are essential in helping Hispanic children to learn English and to do better in school	83%	16%	1%
b. Bilingual programs are important to maintaining Hispanic traditions	63%	35%	2%
c. Bilingual programs put Hispanic children at a disadvantage because they won't learn English as quickly as they might otherwise	26%	71%	3%
d. Since only a small minority of Hispanic children have serious difficulties with English, bilingual programs may not be worth the effort	24%	73%	3%
e. Bilingual programs will help Hispanic children become more employable	73%	23%	3%
f. Since Hispanics are becoming a very large part of the American population, bilingual programs are equally important for Anglo children	78%	18%	3%

15. Varying degrees of emphasis on English and Spanish have been proposed by various educators. I'm going to read a list of proposals. For each one, please tell me if you agree or disagree. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. All classes should be taught in English	49%	49%	2%
b. Basic subjects should be taught in English, with supplementary courses in Spanish	75%	22%	3%
c. Basic subjects should be taught in Spanish, with supplementary courses in English	25%	73%	2%
d. All classes should be taught in Spanish	1%	97%	2%
e. Children should be allowed to choose whether they want to be taught in English or Spanish	21%	76%	3%

16. Parochial schools have been suggested as an alternative to public school education for Hispanic children. Do you feel parochial schools offer higher quality, lower quality, or do they offer about the same quality of education as public schools?

a. Higher quality 45%
b. About the same 42%
c. Lower quality 9%
d. Not sure/Don't know 3%

17. As a Hispanic, do you believe that Hispanics can climb the economic ladder and still retain Hispanic traditions?

a. Yes	94%
b. No	5%
c. Not sure/Don't know	1%

18. In the 1980 Presidential election, only 30% of Hispanics went to the polls, vs. 51% for Blacks and 61% for the Anglo population. What, in your view, is the single greatest cause of low Hispanic voting participation? **(UNAIDED)**

Lack of political information, awareness	31%
Feeling that voting won't make a difference	41%
Failure of political leadership to address Hispanic problems, seek Hispanic support	9%
Lack of Education	6%
Other	14%

19. I'm going to read some possible reasons for the low Hispanic voter participation rate. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that this is not a reason at all: **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. The feeling on the part of Hispanics that voting will not make a difference	73%
b. Discriminatory voting practices against Hispanics	26%
c. Lack of political information	68%
d. Lack of qualified organizers and leaders	65%
e. Distrust of government	55%
f. Hispanic tradition of self-reliance, and not joining groups	36%
g. Poor education of Hispanics	59%

20. Now I'd like to find out how well you feel various institutions serve the needs of Hispanics. I'm going to read a list of institutions, and I'd like you to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 5. A "5" means that you feel the Hispanic population is very well served by that institution, and a "1" means that Hispanics are very poorly served. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Churches	61%
b. Unions	31%
c. Public Schools	37%
d. Corporations	13%
e. Hispanic newspapers, radio and TV stations	51%
f. Mainstream newspapers, radio and TV stations	17%
g. Charitable organizations	26%
h. Hispanic Civil Rights and Service Organizations	43%
i. Non-Hispanic Civil Rights and Service Organizations	16%
j. Federal government	24%
k. State governments	26%
l. Local governments	35%

21. The Federal government provides many different programs and services. In which areas do you feel Hispanics are *best* served by the Federal government? **(UNAIDED)**

Social Services	34%
Education	13%
Jobs/Job Training	10%
Other areas	43%

22. In which areas do you feel Hispanics are *least* served by the Federal government? **(UNAIDED)**

Education	16%
Jobs	17%
Social Services	10%
Other areas	57%

23. I'm going to read some statements of political interest to many Hispanics. After I read each one, please indicate whether you agree or disagree. **(READ EACH STATEMENT)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. The U.S. should normalize relations with Cuba	47%	46%	8%
b. Puerto Rico should become our 51st state	50%	31%	19%
c. Puerto Rico should be granted independence	38%	41%	20%
d. Puerto Rico should remain a commonwealth	29%	51%	20%
e. Amnesty should be granted to all undocumented Hispanics residing in the U.S.	38%	55%	7%
f. Families of undocumented Hispanic workers are entitled to the same social services as American citizens	44%	52%	4%
g. The U.S. should make it easier for undocumented Hispanics to work here	45%	52%	3%

D.
"For Further Information..."

Aspira of America, Inc.
114 East Twenty-eighth Street, New York, New York 10016
(212) 889-6101

Aspira is dedicated to the educational and leadership development of Hispanic and other minority youth. Publications include METAS, a journal of research and policy analysis on education and related social issues that affect Puerto Ricans and other minority groups.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus
House Annex 2—Room 557, Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 226-3430

The Caucus is committed to all legislation meeting the needs of Hispanic Americans. It publishes a monthly newsletter, AVANCE.

Cuban American Legal Defense and Education Fund (CALDEF)
130 East Lewis Street, Post Office Box 10538, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
(219) 422-5539

CALDEF was organized to help Cuban Americans and other Hispanics gain equal treatment and equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, politics, and justice. CALDEF publishes a monthly, THE HISPANIC NEWSLETTER.

Cuban National Planning Council
300 S.W. Twelfth Avenue—Third Floor, Miami, Florida 33130
(305) 642-3484

The Council's purpose is to identify the social, economic, and cultural needs of Cubans in the United States and to assist Cubans in their adjustment to U.S. society. It publishes a number of brochures and position papers.

Hispanic Higher Education Coalition
20 F Street, N.W.—Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 638-7339

The purpose of the Coalition, composed of 13 national organizations, is to improve the participation and support of Hispanics in postsecondary education. It publishes the quarterly HHEC NEWSLETTER.

Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, Inc.
Post Office Box 1146 RCU, New York, New York 10185
(212) 689-6331

The Institute is a policy analysis organization, focusing on the social problems of Puerto Ricans. Publications include an annual report, LATINO VOTER REGISTRATION IN NEW YORK CITY, as well as a quarterly newsletter, DIALOGO.

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
815 Sixteenth Street, N.W.—Suite 707, Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 347-4223

A Hispanic trade union association representing 43 international unions in 80 chapters throughout the United States, LCLAA works to achieve social dignity, economic and political justice, and improved living standards for Hispanic workers. It publishes a newsletter, LA VOZ LATINA, six times a year.

Latino Institute
53 West Jackson Boulevard—Suite 940, Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 663-3603

The Institute provides leadership training for parents and for civic organizations. It also researches community problems, including civil rights, employment, housing, and education. It publishes a variety of materials and a monthly newsletter, TELETIPO.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
2590 Morgan Avenue, Post Office Drawer 5427, Corpus Christi, Texas 78405
(512) 882-8284

The League is the oldest and largest Hispanic organization in the United States, with chapters in every state. It publishes LATINO MAGAZINE and AVISO, a bimonthly newsletter that alerts its membership to legislation or national issues affecting their welfare.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
28 Geary Street—Sixth Floor, San Francisco, California 94108
(415) 981-5800

MALDEF is a national advocacy agency that protects the rights of U.S. Hispanics and works to advance Hispanic communities. It publishes a quarterly, the MALDEF NEWSLETTER.

Midwest Voter Registration Education Project
51 North High Street—Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 464-1116

The Project is a non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the political participation of Hispanics through education and voter registration. It publishes reports and manuals.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.—Suite 405, Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-7870

NABE works to publicize quality bilingual curricula in educational programs serving all languages, and to inform

the public about the necessity for such programs. Publications include NABE NEWS, issued five times a year, and NABE JOURNAL, published quarterly.

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
504 C Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 546-2536

NALEO was established to improve the health and the economic, social, and educational welfare of Hispanics, to inform Hispanic voters about issues affecting them, and to register Hispanic voters. A newsletter, NALEO WASHINGTON REPORT, is issued quarterly.

National Chicano Council on Higher Education
600 West Twenty-eighth Street—Suite 201, Austin, Texas 78705
(512) 479-8497

Dedicated to serving the needs of all sectors of the Chicano higher education community, the Council publishes a monthly newsletter, LA RED/THE NET.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
Twenty F Street, N.W.—Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 628-9600

The Council is a broad-based service organization of 120 affiliated groups. It was chartered to advance the social and economic well-being of Hispanic communities. Publications include policy analyses, statistical summaries, issue briefs, and "Action Alerts" on issues of concern to Hispanics.

National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC)
701 North Fairfax Street—Suite 310, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-0020

The Coalition's primary mission is to foster the social, economic, and political well-being of all Puerto Ricans. NPRC publishes public policy studies and produces a monthly newsletter, NPRC REPORTS.

National Puerto Rican Forum, Inc.
450 Park Avenue South—Eleventh Floor, New York, New York 10016
(212) 685-2311

The Forum is dedicated to the socio-economic development of the nation's Hispanic communities. It concentrates on job training and employment programs, and publishes a variety of materials.

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (PRLDEF)
95 Madison Avenue—Suite 1304, New York, New York 10016
(212) 532-8470

PRLDEF was created to protect and further the rights of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics. It challenges discrimination in education, voting rights, housing, employment, and health. It's publications include a newsletter, PRLDEF UPDATE.

SER—Jobs for Progress, Inc.
1355 River Bend Drive—Suite 350, Dallas, Texas 75247
(214) 631-3999

SER seeks to serve the economic, social, and educational needs of the nation's Hispanic communities. It publishes a monthly newsletter, SER NETWORK NEWS.

Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
201 North St. Mary's—Suite 501, San Antonio, Texas 78205
(512) 222-0224

The Project is a non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the political participation of Hispanics through political education and voter registration. It publishes a number of reports, studies, and manuals.

For additional information on Hispanic organizations, see—

- A GUIDE TO HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS, published by Philip Morris U.S.A., Public Affairs Department, 100 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.
- GUIDEBOOK TO HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION, published by ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027.

(Information was extracted from both publications for use in this compilation.)

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